THE CHILDREN SPEAK

'One thing that will come out of this dispute is that every child of every docker will know how to fight…'

Doreen McNally, chair, Women of the Waterfront

Simon Melia, aged 14, spoke at the second anniversary rally.

WHEN the dock dispute first broke out, our family was distraught.

My dad had lost his job and things were looking very bleak. At the time I was only 12 and didn't fully understand.

But what made things so much better for me, my brother and sister, was meeting with other children whose dads or grandads had been sacked. We all seemed to have the same sort of problems.

At first, going to the picket line was an advantage, but as I've grown older, I have realised what the picket line and the dispute is all about.

It's not just about the men fighting for their jobs in this generation but for the younger people of the next.

I've been very proud to have stood on the picket line with the older men who have fought a battle against casualisation in the past.

I've also been proud to stand with the young dockers and it's been a great honour to have developed a friendship with some of the international guests, although a certain Australian guest, whose name I won't mention, happens to support Man United.

But we can't hold that against him as the work he, and all the other international supporters, have done for us is phenomenal.

Having Robbie Fowler, Steve McManaman and people like Noel Gallagher supporting our struggle has created an interest amongst young people, which can only be a good thing.

I have continuously been asked in school how things are going, by teachers and pupils alike. One thing I have learnt from this dispute is to always stand up for myself and what I believe in, like the men, women and children here today.

One last thing before I go: Noel Gallagher is donating a track to the Liverpool dockers' CD. When they play 'Don't look back in anger' at Earls Court tonight, they are going to record it and put it on the CD.

- Victory to the Liverpool dockers!

Joanne Bennett, aged 14

GOOD afternoon. My name is Joanne Bennett and I'm here to talk about the docks dispute.

When my Dad got sacked, I found it very hard to understand the situation, as it was a difficult time for my Dad.

But as time went on my Mum joined with a group of other wives and they became involved with the Women of the Waterfront.

I too got involved with other people and me and my sisters began to make friends with other dockers' children.

After a couple of weeks there was no sign of him getting his job back and I began to feel a bit upset as I knew it would affect my family emotionally and financially.

But we learnt to get along with the situation we were in and we began going to pickets and marches.

But now two years have gone by and I fully understand the dispute, which makes me more determined to believe that my Dad will get his job back and all the other dockers.

And in the end they will all be able to march through the dock gates proudly and begin work where they belong.

NEPTUNE JADE

***NEPTUNE JADE* has become the symbol of resistance to casualisation and anti-trade union laws.**

Dockers on the west coast of the USA, Canada and Japan are boycotting its cargo in solidarity with the Liverpool dockers.

SACKED

The 500 men were sacked by the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company (MDHC) in September 1995, for refusing to cross a picket line set up by young dockers fighting casualisation.

The huge container vessel sailed from port to port in Europe, loading cargo and heading through the Panama Canal.

But its fatal mistake was to pick up containers from Thamesport, under the port authority of MDHC.

When the *Neptune Jade* reached Oakland in San Francisco Bay, there was a picket line in support of the Liverpool men.

The International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) members saw the picket line mounted by supporters of the Liverpool dockers and felt unable to cross the line.

Although the ship was operating under Hapag Lloyd, the international nature of capital interest in the voyage in clear.

Neptune Jade is owned by Neptune Orient Lincs, which has a container trade alliance with Hapag Lloyd.

And Hapag Lloyd has a slot share arrangement with Atlantic Container Line (ACL), which uses scab labour in the port of Liverpool.

Hapag Lloyd containers are loaded through Liverpool and cross to the US east coast on ACL vessels.

Neptune Jade was delayed in Oakland for four days and eventually gave up, having failed to discharge any cargo.

The operators then decided to skip the scheduled ports of Seattle and Portland. They sent the ship forward to the Canadian port of Vancouver.

However, there was another picket line and more ILWU dockers. The ship was not unloaded.

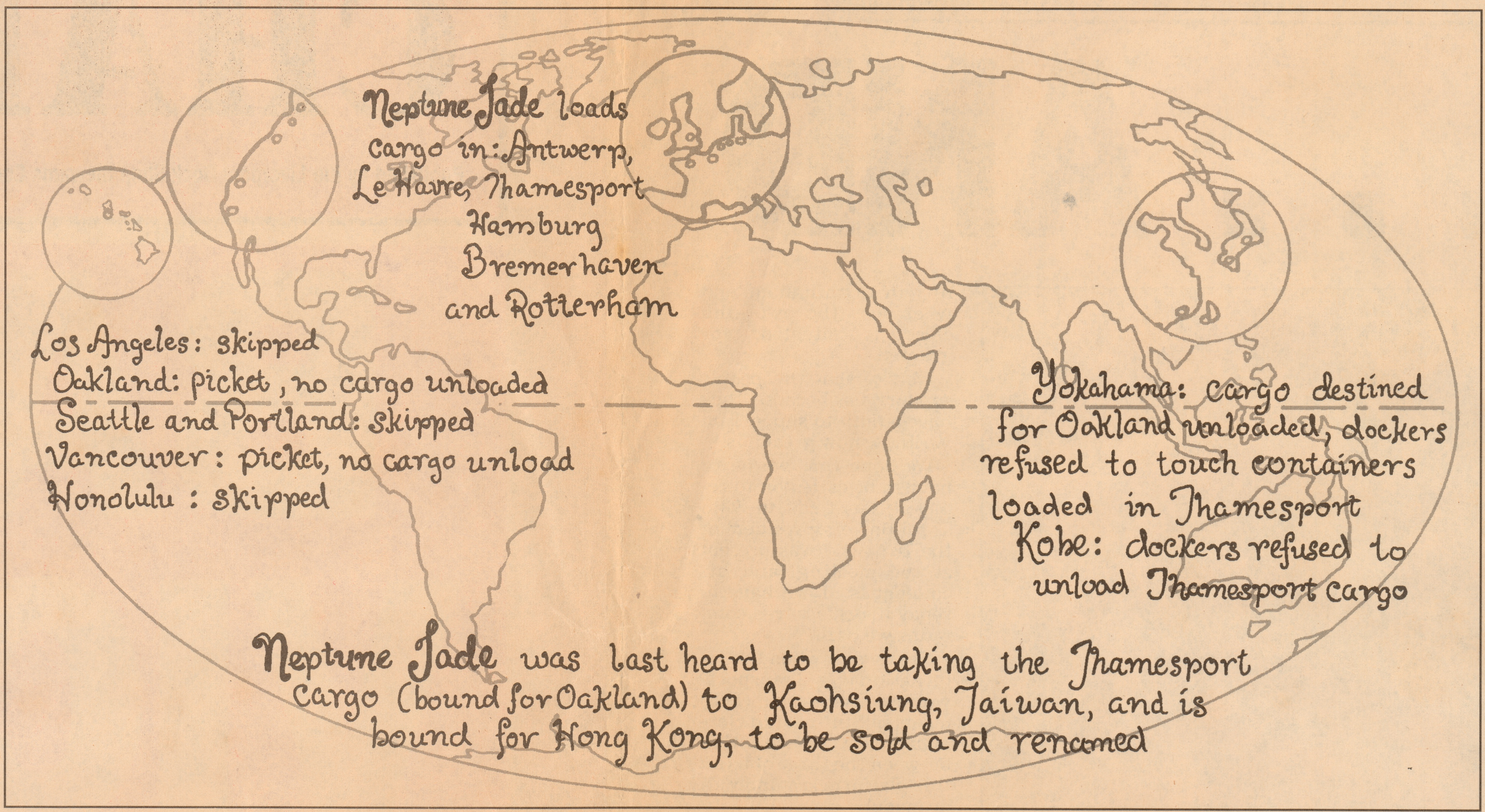
In desperation, *Neptune Jade* set sail for Japan, skipping another scheduled port — Honolulu.

In the gigantic Japanese port of Yokahama, dockers stood firm in support of Liverpool.

ACTION

They were carrying out the resolution agreed at the Asia-Pacific regional conference of the International Transport workers' Federation (ITF), when over 300 delegates from 26 countries agreed continuous action against ships and shipping companies still using the port of Liverpool.

'Helpfully' the Yokahama dockers unloaded the containers which should have been left in Oakland, except for those loaded in Thamesport, which they left aboard.


Neptune Jade loads cargo in: Antwerp, Le Havre, Thamesport Hamburg Bremerhaven and Rotterham
Los Angeles: skipped
Oakland: picket, no cargo unloaded
Seattle and Portland: skipped
Vancouver: picket, no cargo unload
Honolulu: skipped
Yokahama: cargo destined for Oakland unloaded, dockers refused to touch containers loaded in Thamesport
Kobe: dockers refused to unload Thamesport cargo
Neptune Jade was last heard to be taking the Thamesport cargo (bound for Oakland) to Kaohsiung, Taiwan, and is bound for Hong Kong, to be sold and renamed

The same thing happened in Kobe.

The cost of all this is incalculable. Failure to deliver cargo has many hidden knock-on effects.

In an attempt to bring matters to a head and try to pin the blame somewhere, the employers have taken Oakland longshoreman and shop steward Jack Heyman and picket captain (member of the Inland Boatmen's Union) Robert Irminger and others to court.

The employers are seeking damages of $2m.

The last time we heard of *Neptune Jade* it was taking the Thamesport cargo (bound for Oakland!) to Kaohsiung (Taiwan) and is bound for Hong Kong, where the ship is due to be sold and renamed.

Could we suggest it is re-christened *The Flying Dutchman*?!

- Another scab ship has been sighted off the coast of Los Angeles.

WATCH THIS SPACE!

Ballad of the *Neptune Jade*

Sailed into Oakland on a Sunday morn
Moored at the dockside blowin' her horn
But the Captain's lookin' a bit forlorn
There's a picket of the Neptune Jade.

The company say we gotta cross the line
Took us to the courtroom four more times
Singing 'gimme' is money and the money's all mine
So get them boxes movin'!'

Midnight Tuesday she was in a spin
Sailed around the bay, tried to come back again
But the picket was holding and we wouldn't go in
We're a longshore union.

The Neptune Jade's had a change of name
She's the Flying Dutchman once again
Hapag Lloyd must be insane
To call in Liverpool.

Headed up to Canada lookin' for a berth
Thamesport's screaming for all that they are worth
On Saturday the picket brought them down to earth
Vancouver's in the union.

So sail around the world with your hot cargo
Order us to scab and we'll say no
Dockers of the world are set to blow
We're all from Liverpool!

Affiliate to the DOCKERS' CHARTER — combat the conspiracy of silence!

THE Dockers Charter has been produced by the Merseyside Port Shop Stewards over the last 23 months to combat the conspiracy of silence surrounding the Liverpool docks' dispute and to give up-to-date information to our supporters.

The cost of producing the Charter has been met by the Merseyside Port Shop Stewards and often the paper has been given free to many branches nationally.

Unfortunately, this is no longer possible and we therefore suggest the following proposal. We are requesting that branches/organisations affiliate to the Dockers' Charter.

£10 PER MONTH STANDING ORDER

You will receive (including postage and packing):

12 copies of the Dockers' Charter
Up-to-date reports from Merseyside Port Shop Stewards
The name of your branch/organisation printed in the Charter in the new affiliates section.

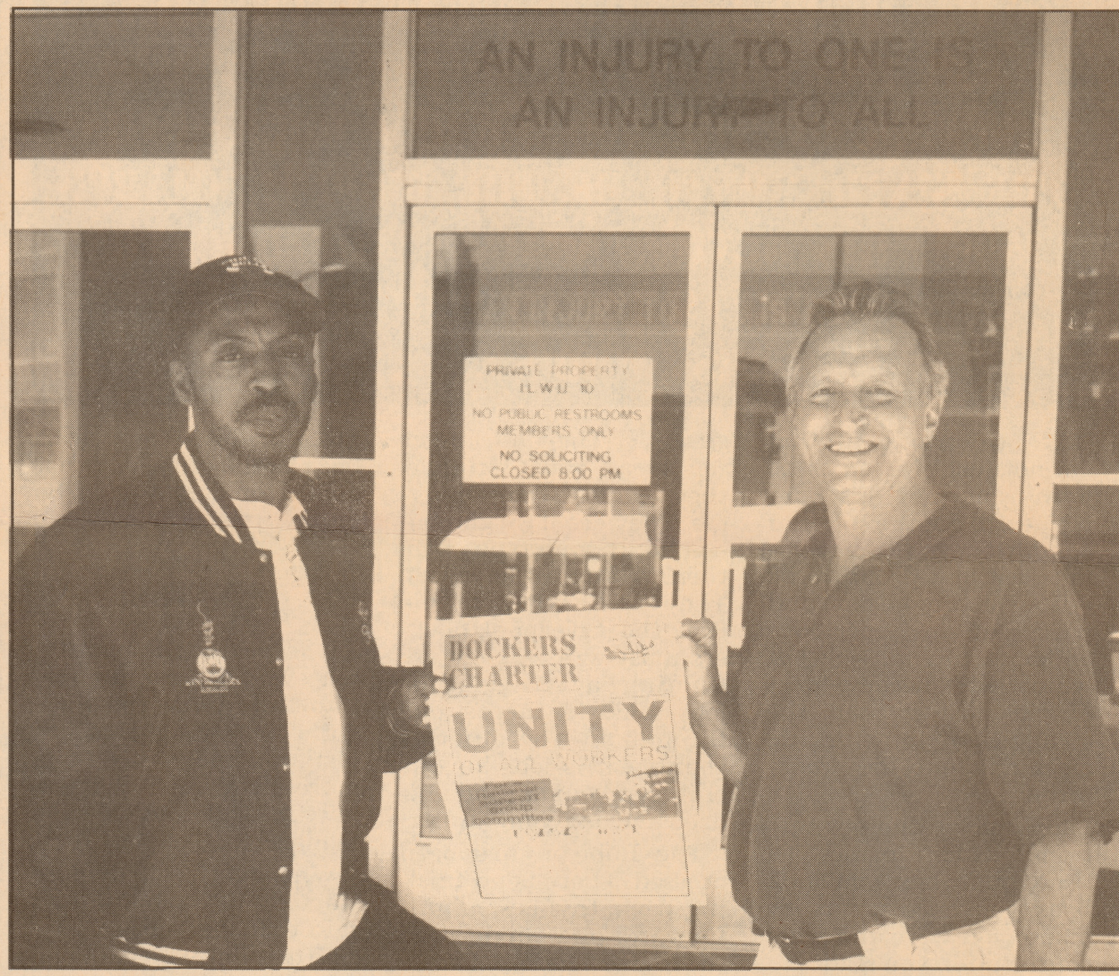
INDIVIDUAL REDUCED AFFILIATION: £1.50 PER MONTH

Please return all completed Standing Order forms to:
Brother J. Davies, 19 Scorton Street, Liverpool L6 4AS.

Please mark 'Dockers Charter' clearly on the envelope.

Bank details: Midland Bank, Dale Street (40–29–12).

Account: Merseyside Dockers Shop Stewards' Appeal Fund no: 01775480.


AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL
PRIVATE PROPERTY ILWU 10
NO PUBLIC RESTROOMS MEMBERS ONLY
NO SOLICITING CLOSED 8:00 PM
DOCKERS CHARTER
UNITY
OF ALL WORKERS

Jack Heyman of the US International Longshore and Warehouse Union (right) and fello longshoreman Harold hold up a Dockers Charter outside their Oakland union office

Organise from within!

Docks Shop Steward Terry Teague spoke at a meeting of workers threatened with redundancy at the Tulip factories on Merseyside.

LET me start by wishing you every success in your fight to keep open the Tulip factories in New Brighton and Morton.

We also offer our help and assistance in your campaign to prevent further mass job losses on Merseyside.

We've seen far too many jobs losses in Merseyside over the past two years — Spillers, Fords, Littlewoods, council departments, postal workers — and there are more in the pipeline.

Thousands of jobs lost; thousands of future opportunities wasted all falling to the need and greed of what the modernisers call 'market forces'.

In other words what the market wants the market gets!

VICTORY

Well, enough's enough. It's time to start a fight back, and if the workers in Tulip, like ourselves, really believe in what they are fighting for (jobs and not a pay-off) then a victory can be achieved. This in turn would play a major part in that fight back.

If there is just one lesson that we can pass on from our own struggle, it would be the need to organise from within.

Make sure that the rank-and-file are involved at all times. Don't leave it to union leaders or politicians to give the lead. Do it yourselves and drag them along if you can.

For them to take the 'lead' will only end in compromise or defeat. That means job losses, poorer conditions, greater flexibility and erosion of trade union rights.

Why is that so? Because the establishment they represent believes in the policies of the market forces — privatisation, casualisation and deregulation — that have done so much to damage the lives of workers the world over.

They also believe in the anti-trade-union laws that have destroyed workers' rights and solidarity action.

Those same laws have propped up rogue employers like Tulip and the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company.

You would expect the Tories and the Confederation of British Industries to uphold those employers, but we shouldn't have to fight our own union leadership, the TUC and the Labour Party.

Their role in our dispute, as in so many other industrial disputes, has been disgraceful.

But their modern-day betrayal of so many just causes will rebound on them. An alternative Labour and trade union movement will be created.

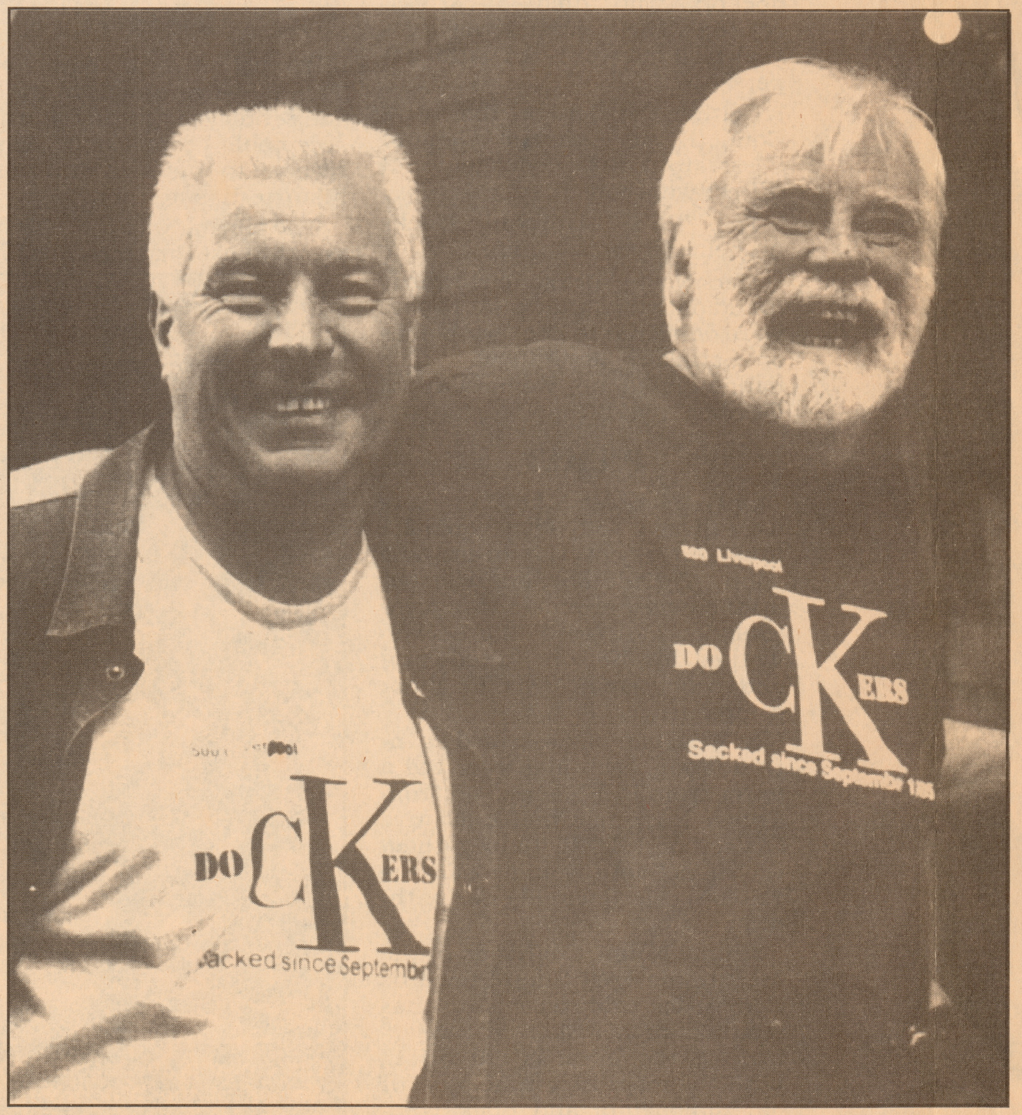
SUCCESS

The main area of success in our campaign has been the policy of taking the fight directly to fellow workers and supporters, nationally and internationally, setting up support groups, addressing thousands of meetings, travelling to major ports and cities the world over, meeting with rank-and-file workers in their own union halls and meeting rooms.

But our so-called leaders have stood on the sidelines and watched that success, and seen the daily picketing that has maintained our belief.

Let us hope that when the victory is finally achieved it will be remembered not just for us alone, but for all those groups of workers, employed and unemployed, who are now mobilising against the global erosion of employment rights.

Let us, together, fight so that future generations can have a better world to live in.



Jimmy Davies, dock shop stewards' secretary (left), with actor Anthony Booth (Tony Blair's father-in-law) who was appearing in Brothers of the Brush at the Everyman Theatre in Liverpool

Don't underestimate us!

Jimmy Davies, secretary of the Mersey Port Shop Stewards' Committee, welcomed the international guests who had come to Liverpool for the second anniversary march and rally.

'IT is tremendous to see you,' he said. 'We take this opportunity to thank you for your support over these two years.'

Comparing this international support to the situation in the port of Liverpool among workers organised in the T&G, he considered it 'a disgrace that members of our own union are still at work in the port.

'I am talking about the tugboat crews, the ancillary workers and some of the scabs,' he said.

REFUSING

Jimmy reported the 'big disappointment' of the Liverpool dockworkers when they 'learned this week from the T&G's Assistant General Secretary that General Secretary Bill Morris is not only refusing to give active support, but is actively working against' them.

It would be a tremendous boost if the International Transport workers Federation (ITF) gave its official and full support to the thousands of dockworkers around the world who are acting in solidarity with the Liverpool men, Jimmy told the rally.

But Morris had contacted the ITF, telling them it would be 'morally wrong' to give that support when the T&G is not giving such support.

'Well, we say to Morris: it is morally wrong of you to allow 500 of your members to be beaten into submission,' said Jimmy, and warned:

'Don't underestimate the power of the Liverpool dockers. We "done you" at the Biennial Delegate Conference and we can do you again!'

He addressed a special message to Liverpool trade unionists: ' It is time that the workers of this city started raising their heads above the parapet. Your financial aid is fine, but you should be taking more positive action on behalf of the Liverpool dockers.

'You know that we would have taken that positive action for you! Don't allow the finest frontline troops of Britain's working class to spend another winter in the trenches alone!

'Victory to the international working class! Victory to the Liverpool dockers!'

Welcome to the following new affiliates to Dockers Charter

GPMU Merseyside
Piccadilly Train Crew SHF
CWU Central London Eng. Branch
Blackpool North & Fleetwood CLP
Leicester & District Apex branch
Unison – Fife council
TGWU branches 1/111, 5/22, 5/908, 5/789, 1/1538, 5/909
ACTTS 8/10, 157, 1/406
CWU Manchester
JSSC Dundee Direct Works
GMU Chiltern & Thames Valley
RMT, Motherwell & Wishaw
UCATT, Liverpool DLO
GMB Liverpool Eng. DSO.
Branbury and Bicester Teachers' Assoc.
Network for Social Change
MSF London Ins. and Fin Branch 480
CPSA Glasgow DNS branch
Hundburn & Rossendale TUC
GPMU London Region
Sheffield Vol & Gen MSF 0285
Piccadilly & Dist West 1220
Unison, Southern Gen. Hosp. Glasgow
NUT, Herts Division
UNISON, Southampton Dist. Branch
CWU Solent Amal. Branch
Swindon TUC
Birmingham NUJ
GMB Merseyside No.7
St Helens TUC
GMB Fulham No.1
MSF Liverpool Cen. & Telecom Branch
Bob Goupillot
G. Gunn
J.F. Welsh
J. Hillier
J. Shufflebottom
V. Constable
S. Pearce
A. Fraser

VIDEO: All for One — World Wide Dockers' Action for Liverpool

A unique video shot in Liverpool, San Francisco, Tokyo and Stockholm. Environmental activists occupy the grain terminal; dramatic footage from the picket line; mass meetings in Tokyo; a dockers' strike leader in Sweden; confrontation with the British Consul in San Francisco.

All proceeds to dockers' Appeal Fund. UK version price £5 (UK) £7 abroad.

Order from **Merseyside Port Shop Stewards, Transport House, Liverpool L3 8EQ. Tel: 0151 207 3388; fax: 0151 207 0696.**